



Lutheran Church

News from 4040 N. 108th Street, Omaha, NE 68164
January, 2017



Blessing of Baptism

Baptism...saves you—not the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. - 1 Peter 3:21

“Want a tough stain out?” That’s how the old commercial began. It ended by claiming a product that could get the job done. There are lots of sprays, foams, and cleaners that companies promise are the answer to our coffee, wine, and pet stain problems. But can any of those products deliver? If there actually was a stain remover guaranteed to deliver results as promised and was free...would you be interested?

God has one for you. He has provided a special “product” that has his faithful promise and almighty power behind it; and it is completely free. It’s not for coffee, wine, or pet stains, but for something far worse. It’s for guilt!

Guilt is what is left behind when we sin, and like an ugly stain it sticks in our hearts and minds. We want to get rid of it, but how? We can’t shout it out, even though guilt can make us angry and do lots of shouting. We can’t scrub it out, even if we try our hardest to clean up the messes we have made. So, what can get the tough stain of guilt out?

Baptism.

Baptism in a word that means to wash with water. God’s word together with water makes baptism a cleanser that God promises will bring results: “...not the removal of dirt...but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.” A guilty conscience comes from sin, and sin makes us unacceptable before our holy, sinless God. Baptism takes away our guilt because in baptism God connects us to Jesus and his work of salvation. In baptism God gives us the great gift of forgiveness through Jesus. His death was the payment for sin, and his resurrection is the guarantee that the stain of our sin has been removed. By our baptism God frees us from guilt. We are saved from the consequences of sin—death and damnation!

Think about your house with every single stain removed from your carpet and couch, and from your shirt and blouse. Even the toughest stains are eliminated. Baptism is a blessing of God that is much greater! Baptism is God’s amazing life-saving “product” to take out the stain of sin’s guilt from your heart. Jesus guarantees it.



CALLED BY CHRIST

Galatians 1:11-24

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles -- only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

Paul's opponents in Galatia had put him on the defensive. By bad-mouthing him and by questioning his authority they forced Paul to defend not only his apostleship but also the Gospel that he was proclaiming. Paul's logical argument is clear, and it makes the point that he is a genuine apostle and that the Gospel he proclaimed was God's Gospel.

Paul admitted the sins of his former way of life. He was open and honest about the way he had risen in the ranks of Judaism and about how zealous he had been in persecuting Christians. But God changed all that. God had planned to use Paul's zeal for a greater purpose - to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. So, on the road to Damascus, our risen Savior spoke with Paul. The Holy Spirit brought him to faith. The Lord instructed him and gave him the key to understanding the Old Testament Scriptures. As a man who thoroughly knew the Old Testament, Paul could now study the Old Testament in the light of Christ. Paul didn't rely on any man - not even the other apostles - to teach him. The Word did the teaching.

And that's the point. Paul's apostleship is genuine, because the Lord called him to service directly and sent him out into the mission field - just look at the circumstances surrounding his conversion! Secondly, the Gospel he proclaimed - while it was in full agreement with what the other apostles were teaching - was not manmade nor taught to him by men. It was God's Gospel that he had revealed to him. The point for the skeptics in Galatia and the point for us today is that Paul has no hidden agenda. He's not looking to make a name for himself. He wants to share the name of Jesus. He assumed no authority on his own. He's simply acting on the authority God had given him. His words can be trusted and believed, because they are the very words of God that the Holy Spirit inspired him to write. With the churches in Judea, we can praise God for a servant of Christ like Paul.

Some questions for all of us to ponder in the New Year.

- How important is it to not bad mouth any of God's Called servants?
- How important is it to defend and speak well of all God's Called servants?
- To what lengths are we willing to go - what are we willing to suffer - to proclaim the Gospel to others?
- How adamant are we willing to be when it comes to defending the Gospel of free grace?

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, thank you for your Gospel and for your gift of faith to believe it. Thank you for the people in my life who have and who continue to proclaim it faithfully. Help me to defend both them and the Gospel. Make me bold to proclaim your truth. Amen.

School News

JOY
to the world

A stolen quote from a good man I know - "If you have ever wondered why you support an expensive Christian education, whether by your offerings or tuition for a child - this is why!"

This was the man's reaction after attending a Christmas service where over 100 children from a church and school presented the message of the birth of our Savior Jesus. Services just like the one he was talking about took place by the hundreds across the WELS within the last two weekends.

I appreciate this quote for several reasons.

- The man values the next generation's knowledge of God's Word.
- He values the next generation sharing the Word with previous generations.
- He has seen the value of Christian education in his own children, now all grown up.
- He identifies the significant commitment by a congregation that is needed to provide Christian education.
- He identifies the significant commitment by a family that is needed to provide Christian education.
- He is willing to make all of these things talking points among his friends and acquaintances.

Probably speaking for far too many, I'll say that GLC/GLS was very proud to offer our Christmas service to a great number of people two weekends ago. Undoubtedly with bias, I feel the same way that my friend does. And the concept of the Sunday School/Elementary School service is a staple of Christmas time for so many of us. Obviously a large number of our attendees were family and friends connected to GLC/GLS students, but also a good number came just to hear what the children had to say without looking for a specific or particular face. Regardless of who they were or why they came, the message of a Savior being born to save all of mankind was a strong enough draw to brave the cold and enough (for some) to add a decent amount of drive time to what is normal for a Sunday. And they came. And in so doing, they also would seem to agree with my friend.

That is what makes Christmas so special. That is what makes Gethsemane so special. That is a "gift" that keeps on giving.

Christ, the Savior, is born!

May God bless you the rest of this Christmas season and into the New Year.

Mr. Pederson



(Friends Of Christian Education)

Happy New Year from FOCE! Winter Carnival will be held on Friday, January 20 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.! We are looking for volunteers to help make this event a success! We've created a signup through Volunteer Spot, and the link is included below:

<http://signup.com/go/SdmZLb>

Please sign up for a shift and help make this event a smashing success!

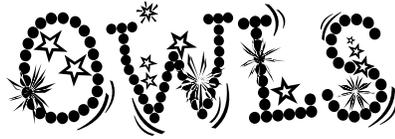
Our next FOCE meeting date has been tentatively changed to Tuesday, February 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall.

Have a blessed new year!!

Liz K, Secretary



Please turn in your receipts dated between September 1 and December 31 as soon as possible. There are boxes on the table in the school hallway or on the corner table in the fellowship hall in which to place them. These will be turned in within the next couple of weeks. Thank you for your support!



(Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors)



The December Meeting of the OWLS was followed by a Christmas Light Tour after a short meeting and light snack. The Christmas Lights were fantastic. We could not believe we were in Omaha. Some houses had thousands of lights. We would not want their light bill for December. We sang and had snacks and a good time was had by all, UNTIL, the bus broke down! Yes, our 2-hour tour turned into a 3-hour adventure! Laughter and fellowship was had by all, and we all made it home ok.

The election of Officers was voted in at the meeting with Dick as our president, and Sandy as our secretary/treasurer being retained for another year. Ruth C will replace Dick A as vice president for 2017.

The January 2017 meeting will be January 8th at Good Shepherd at 2:00 p.m. This will be a planning meeting, so bring your ideas; and let's plan for the best year ever!

Now is the time to sign up for OWLS, so please contact one of the officers; and come to the January meeting! See you all there!!

Sandy T, Secretary



(Women IN God's Service)

Thank you to everyone who attended Advent by Candlelight. About 40 ladies were in attendance, and a wonderful time was had by all.

Our annual Bunco/ugly sweater/white elephant gift exchange will be at my house on Monday, January 9th at 7 p.m. See the church directory for my address. Bring a snack/drink to share.

Please contact the church office with any questions.

Rachel C
Secretary



(Lutheran Women's Missionary Society)



“With the Lord begin your Task”

Happy New Year!

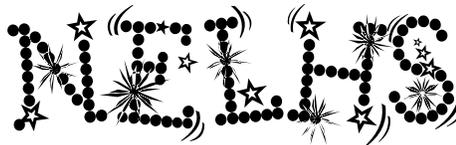
With this new year, brings us new Befriend a Missionaries for the next two years. Look for more information in the upcoming weeks, as it comes available. January and February are our congregation's months to show our support to them with our offerings and gifts. What a neat way to give to missionaries, serving throughout the world!

Want to take a trip to Florida? Well, this summer is your chance! The 54th Annual LWMS Convention will be held in Orlando, Florida, June 22nd-25th, 2017! And.... guess what?!?! Our NE-IA Circuit has a Send One Sister program, and will give money towards one lady in our circuit who would like to attend her first convention! So...if you are thinking about attending your first convention, let me know! I would love to connect you to the Send One Sister program! Start making your plans now!

January Prayer Requests

- The work being done at the WELS Home Office.
- The work being done in Malawi.
- The students at Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, as they begin a new semester of school.

Leslie B
~Reporter



(Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School)

- **Sports update:**
 - The boys and girls basketball teams' seasons have both started strongly. The boys' varsity is now 6-0 and the girls' varsity is 4-2. Both teams won their division of the Martin Luther College Tip-off Tournament in New Ulm, MN.
- **Calls:**
 - Pastor Haakenson has returned the call to be a pastor at Star of Bethlehem in Santa Maria, California, and will continue his work as our campus pastor at NELHS. We thank the Lord for this and pray that Star of Bethlehem would soon fill their vacancy.
 - Mr. Wells has received a call to teach English and coach at Fox Valley Lutheran High School in Appleton, WI. We pray for Mr. Wells as he considers where to serve.
- **MLK Shadow Day:** Monday, January 16, is Martin Luther King, Jr., Day and a day that many schools don't have school. Nebraska Lutheran is in session this day, and we invite any prospective 7th or 8th grade students or high school transfer students to consider joining us for this school day to check out what life is like at Nebraska Lutheran. We will assign prospective students a host student to guide them through their day. We will also provide lunch. Contact Mr. Otte at lotte@nelhs.org if you have a child who would like to participate in this day.
- **Grandparent's Day:** Friday, February 3 will be our first Grandparents' Day at Nebraska Lutheran. Grandparents of current students are invited to join us for chapel at 10:00 a.m. on this day, attend classes with their grandchild, hear special presentations about what is going on at Nebraska Lutheran, and join us for lunch (provided by NELHS). Additionally, we are hosting basketball games that evening starting at 4:00 p.m. We invite the grandparents to join us for a

booster feed (provided by NELHS) and then watch the Knight basketball teams take on McCool Junction. Please RSVP for this event to Lisa at 402-728-5236 or ldressel@nelhs.org.

- **Cheer Camp** will take place on Saturday, February 11. If you are interested in having your daughter participate in cheer camp, contact Coach Katelynn Dorn at kdorn@nelhs.org. Look for more information on this camp coming out soon.
- **Early Application Discount:** Any new students who apply by December 31 receive a \$250 discount on the first year's tuition. To apply, go to www.nelhs.org and click on "enroll now-US students." Please share this with families that are still considering enrollment.
- **Recruitment Update:** Our recruitment goal for next year is 40 new students by the start of school in August of 2017. If you know of a family whom we can contact to tell about our ministry, please let us know. So far we have 19 new students (18 freshmen and 1 sophomore) enrolled for next year. Many families continue to consider enrollment. Please contact Administrator Mark Otte (motte@nelhs.org) if you have the name of a family that we can contact to tell more about our school.

Mark Otte, Administrator



On December 4th, we experienced an unfortunate sewer back-up during Bible study hour. This created clean-up opportunities and, ultimately, an insurance claim for damage. There were many people who were AMAZING with their willingness to jump into the mess and help. THANK YOU to those who helped move stuff, sop up ick with the mops or rags, and try to snake the drain. Other tasks included helping with the repair of the baseboard coving in the fellowship hall and the hallway and helping with the filing of the insurance claim. Your efforts were very much appreciated. With everyone's diligence and the help of ServPro cleaning service, classes were held on Monday morning at Gethsemane Lutheran School! Gethsemane has some awesome people!

A wall has been erected in the basement to section off an area for items to be secured. If you have items that need to be included in this section, please see the church office for access.

Some of you who enter through the school doors may have seen a grey box mounted on the exterior of the school. This is for use by firefighters, should we have a fire alarm and they need to enter the building. This alleviates their breaking through the doors to gain access to the building. In the event of a false alarm, this will save us costly repairs. Thank you to the person who correctly installed it for us.

So far we haven't experienced a lot of snow and ice, but if you've lived in Nebraska long, you realize that it's a real possibility. When the snow does fly, we will do our best to keep the property as safe as possible. We ask that you take extra care when these conditions exist so that you aren't injured by a fall.

If you see something that needs to be repaired, please let the church office know. Thank you for helping us to keep the property in ship shape!





Sunday School

Sunday School starts each week at 9:15 a.m. Please help your child to be on time and attend as often as possible. We carefully prepare lessons each week and look forward to sharing God's word with as many students as possible.

We can sing more songs if we start on time. We like action songs so we can move around before going to our classrooms.

Preschool through 6th grade will meet in the sanctuary from 9:15 to 9:30 for the opening, offering, and songs and then will proceed with their teacher to their classrooms for their lessons. The 7th and 8th grade class starts right away; they meet in Mr. Zimmermann's room. High school students meet in the church basement.

January lessons for Preschool-6th Grade

- 1 - No class - Christmas break
- 8 - The Fall of Jericho
- 15 - God Gives Gideon Victory
- 22 - Samson
- 29 - Samson's Sin and Death

A big thank you to all our teachers, helpers and substitutes who put in time, talents, and resources to have lessons and activities planned for their classes.

See you Sunday!!

Nickie L
Sunday School Coordinator



Offering Statements

Our financial secretaries and the Board of Stewardship have been working on special offering statements in connection with your 2016 offering report. The statements will include your household's annual giving for the past five years (or as many years as you have been a member at Gethsemane if it is less than five years). These statements will come out mid-January.

Rather than giving you "giving ranges" of every member of the congregation and allowing you to figure out what range you fall into (creating the danger of pride rearing its ugly head or the numbers being skewed by inactive members or college students or teens or members away from home; a giving range which, in the end, does very little to guide or direct you in your own stewardship of giving since everyone's situation is different), you will receive a five year track record of what you have given annually since 2012.

Only you know if your income has increased or decreased over that time. Only you know if other life-circumstances played a role in what you were able to give back to the Lord. Only you know if you have been using your envelopes for these offerings to be tracked consistently. But, perhaps this five year comparison will give you some food for thought. If income has increased but offerings have stayed the same or even gone down, is there a reason for that? Even if income has increased, has your annual giving not only increased but has the percent of that income that you give back to the Lord increased as well?

Over the course of this year we have had three different devotions on willing, regular, and percentage giving. Have you, in your faith life, been challenging yourself and trusting your God to increase that percentage each year? Were you at 2 percent? Are you now at 5? Could you shoot for 10? Are you less than 1? Just like an athlete or a musician, the more we continue with a sport or an instrument, the more we'd love to see growth and improvement. Couldn't the same case be made for the offerings that we give back to God?

God bless you in your faith and in the exercise of your faith. If you have any questions about the report or this process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Pastor Helwig

Time & Talent Sheets

We will continue to leave the online link open for filling out the Time and Talent sheets (www.gethsemanelutheran.com/timetalent). The information in these sheets helps to provide some structure and a starting point for organizing the work of the church.

Please take the time to fill these out and prayerfully consider how God has called you to use your time and talent to serve our congregation. You may also use this QR code to access it.



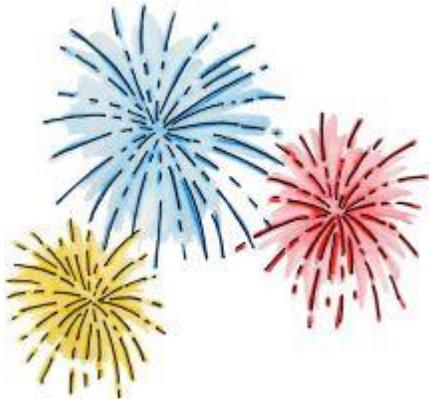
Open Gym

We will be hosting an open gym at Saddlebrook Community Center on January 22nd from 2 to 4 p.m. This is a nice opportunity for some fellowship and fun out of the cold and out of the house. Please join us.

Winter Dance

On February 17th, Gethsemane will host a winter dance for the congregation DJ'd by Scotty B in the fellowship hall. We are looking for four volunteers to form a committee to help with planning and organization of this event. If you would be interested in this opportunity, please let the church office or one of the pastors know.

Thrivent Action Teams



Gethsemane Families -

It's nearing the end of 2016 and Thrivent members are nearing the "use it or lose it" deadline for their 2016 Action Teams. For anyone who is not aware, most Thrivent members over the age of 18 with policies, are eligible for two \$250 Thrivent Action Teams per calendar year to be used for the event of their choice. These Action Teams have already benefited Gethsemane in SO MANY ways - picnic tables by the school entrance, books for the teachers libraries, Christmas for Kids, Easter for Kids, VBS, FOCE Color Run, the cost of busing for the annual GLS Christmas Caroling.....and the list goes on and on!!

These Action Teams are fairly painless to apply for, activate, use and follow up on.....and cost the Thrivent member absolutely nothing! In fact, if the Thrivent Action Team is not used for the year it is gone and the funds are sent to a designation you have absolutely no say in! With this being said, we need to really rally together and see what AMAZING things we can accomplish for GLS/GLC before the end of the year!

A small list of needs (there are many more too numerous to mention) include: Sanctuary updates, jerseys for our many GLC teams, new books for teachers libraries, a new door for the basement, new tire shreds for the playground,the list goes on!!! Get creative and make things happen!

Wendee M has step by step instructions that she can send to anyone who is interested in applying for an Action Team AND she is willing to do the write-up for the project. All you have to do is know your Thrivent login and hit copy and.

All 2016 Thrivent Actions plans need to be submitted by the end January 2017 in order to not be "lost" for the year. If you have ANY questions, concerns, need ideas, or would like to help - PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE contact Wendee to make it happen! Free money for little work is something we don't want to see wasted!

Thanks again for all of the help and support!

Book Club

We will meet again on January 24th (host will be Jean R) at 7 p.m. That evening we'll discuss **The Boys in the Boat** by Daniel James Brown. This is the second book we're obtaining through the Omaha Public Library's Book Bag program.

The chosen books for the rest of our book club year are:

- ✓ February - **The Longest Ride** by Nicholas Sparks - February 28th (host is Liz K)
- ✓ March - **Comfort & Joy** by Kristan Hannah - March 28th (host is Dawn B)
- ✓ April - **One by One** by Jojo Moyes - April 25th (host is Sharon B)

Happy New Year!
Becky G

Card/Meditation Recycling

The OWLS would like your old Christmas cards and Meditations booklets! They use them to make book marks and provide devotionals for Prison Ministries. There is a box on the table in the fellowship hall in which you can put your items. Thank you for your help!



Vacancy Call News

Pastor Adam Bode has declined the call extended to him by Good Shepherd. The saints at Good Shepherd will meet on January 4th to choose another person to whom they will extend a Divine Call. Please keep our brothers and sisters in Christ in your prayers. Pastor Helwig will continue to serve as the vacancy pastor for Good Shepherd until the Lord of the Church provides them with a new pastor. We pray that this will be soon.

Steps of Martin Luther tour

Pastor James Humann, retired WELS pastor, invites you to join him September 18, 2017 for a twelve day, "Steps of Martin Luther" tour to Germany to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. The itinerary includes not only the major sites connected with Luther and the Reformation, but also Prague in the Czech Republic, and Salzburg and Vienna in Austria. Space is limited. Two buses have already been filled for a June departure.

For information about this September tour, including the price and complete itinerary, e-mail Pastor Humann at JHumann383@aol.com. If you would also like a hard copy of the brochure, please include your name and mailing address.